

## Pa232 Counseling

### *Lesson Pa232-14 Temptation: Sexual Sin*

Have you ever caught yourself looking at some sweets your neighbor has just made, that are cooling by her open window? You are hungry; they smell so good. And you see that no one is watching. You are now being tempted. “She won’t miss just one,” you think. Do you yield, or do you resist and go away?

In the previous lesson you learned what temptation is. Someone is drawn away by his or her own desires. That temptation itself is not sin, but it can lead to sin. Temptation can also be a time of testing of your commitment to God. We know our faith in God must be strong enough to cause changes in our lives. Temptation is a personal and individual thing. In our Christian faith we must work to overcome the things that so easily tempt us. Temptation is often described as being drawn towards wrongdoing.

In this lesson we will follow the steps from temptation to disobedience. As you hear this story about David, pay attention to the questions that enter your mind. This lesson will be good for an open discussion with other Christians. You can get their ideas on how they combat the strong pull of temptation. The discussion will give the group insights into how others are dealing with the same issues they may face.

The Book of James explains the cycle of temptation. It can lead to a test of your faith. “Blessed is the one who perseveres [remains strong] under trial or temptation because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12). Often a word of encouragement from someone can be helpful when a person is facing temptation. Temptation is a struggle, but it does build one’s faith when they overcome it. God will not allow a person to be tempted more than he or she can bear. We can assure ourselves and others that temptation is a testing ground of our faith. They can, as Christ did, resist temptation. Jesus directs us to pray that we will not be led into temptation.

James goes on to say, “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.” You may ask yourself or others may ask you to explain, “Why then are we tempted? How can we get away from temptation? Who or what is the cause of it?” James gives the answer to these questions, saying: “Each person is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death,” that is, separation from God (James 1:13-15).

Listen to this story of David, the king of Israel. He was a mighty man of wealth and influence, with a large army to defend his kingdom. He also was known and loved by God. God had chosen him to lead Israel. The story begins: “In the spring, when kings go off to war ... David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful.”

We begin to see how David is being drawn towards his desires. A counselee may tell you that at this point in their temptation, they feel unclean for having such thoughts. That is the small still voice of God saying, “Resist! What you are thinking of doing is unclean and wrong.” When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar’s wife he determined in his heart not to sin against God (Gen 39:9).

David, however, sent someone to find out about the beautiful woman. He was getting too involved and letting his desires get in the way of good judgment. Then David sent messengers to get her and she came to him. Still David is dealing with a temptation. At this point David could still have walked away and said, “I have overcome! I am better than this.” Or, “God, help me, for I am weak.” But he did not.

Bathsheba came to him and he slept with her. Then she went back home. Later she sent word to David, saying “I am pregnant” (2Sam 11:1-5).

David did not remain strong in the face of the temptation. He was not tempted by God, but the temptation was a test of his faith in God. Often, well-meaning Christians who have yielded to temptation are not concerned about disappointing God’s expectation of them. They are more concerned about how their friends and family will react, should they find out. At this point we can encourage such people that God will forgive and forget. That is something many people have difficulty doing. God can and will clear our conscience. And as with David, the Holy Spirit would say, “Why did you do that? I have given you much and would have given even more.”

Temptation is Satan’s attempt to discredit our faith in God. Failure is not the end of the road. Our relationship with God is still there. Because of a person’s failure, repentance is necessary. God’s forgiveness will be given more freely than forgiveness from family and the one we have offended. There is more to this story. What often happens in failure is that one mistake in our faith often leads to even more wrong choices to cover what first was done.

This lesson is **important** because there is a path that leads to destruction. The book of James explains this. A Christian must be quick to repent and restore his relationship with God. In most of the steps mentioned in James, there is a way of escape.

The **main truth** of the lesson is that temptation may begin with one wrong desire. Yielding to that desire can lead to sin and separation from God. Christians must be quick to ask God’s forgiveness and to forgive themselves to restore peace with God.

To **review** this lesson, consider the following questions:

1. When David was being tempted, did he have any way out of his temptation? [Pause]  
A. If you said, “Yes, David had many ways out of his temptation,” you are correct.
2. When a person yields to a temptation, who is quicker to forgive them—God or the one they failed? [Pause]  
A. If you said that God is quicker to forgive a person than a person may be, you are right.
3. When a person has yielded to a temptation, what is the most important thing to do? [Pause]

A. If you answered, “The most important thing to do is to restore your relationship with God,” you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** is to listen to this story several times. Repeat the story of David’s temptation in your words. Make sure you understand the way the Book of James explains how temptation happens.

1. A person is tempted by his own evil desire.
2. After he or she follows the desire, they sin.
3. Sin gives birth to death and separation from God.

Discuss the following question with some fellow believers: “Who does James say is to blame for temptation?” God does not tempt anyone. Satan may arrange circumstances. It is really our fallen human nature and sinful desires, however, that cause us to be tempted. “How can a person best avoid the sin and separation from God?” Ask for God’s help in resisting their own evil desires.